

News Release

For Immediate Release

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What to Know About Measles

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages residents to know if they are protected against measles. Measles is a very contagious disease that causes high fever and rash and may cause other serious complications.

Measles is rapidly spreading in parts of Texas and New Mexico, and cases have also been seen in multiple other states in 2025. Most cases have been reported in people who are not vaccinated (have not had their shots) or whose vaccination status is unknown. There have been no cases reported in Nebraska yet.

“Measles is a highly contagious vaccine-preventable disease,” states Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager with SWNPHD. “The MMR vaccine we use is very safe and effective. It is very important to be protected from this serious illness.”

Symptoms of measles can appear anywhere from 2 days to 21 days after being exposed to the virus. Signs and symptoms of measles include:

- high fever
- cough and runny nose
- red watery eyes
- red rash on the face that spreads to the rest of the body
- tiny white spots known as Koplik spots may be seen in the mouth

A person with measles can spread the virus to other people even before they show symptoms. Measles spreads quickly when people come in contact with the virus. Nine out of 10 unvaccinated people will develop measles if they are exposed. This virus spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The measles virus can stay in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours after a person leaves a room, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Before the invention of the measles vaccine in 1963, there were almost half a million cases of measles every year in the United States. CDC recommends that people get MMR vaccine to protect against measles, mumps, and rubella. Children should get two doses of MMR vaccine, starting with the first dose at 12 to 15 months of age. The second dose is typically given at age 5 or 6 just before kindergarten but can be given as early as age 4.

Teens and adults should also make sure to be up to date on their MMR vaccinations, especially if planning on traveling to areas with measles cases. Nebraska residents can look up their shot records in the Nebraska State Immunization Information System (NESIIS) at nesiis-dhhs-prod.ne.gov.

If you have questions about measles or the MMR vaccine, contact your healthcare provider or the public health nurses at SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov which contains many additional resources.

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